



# Earley Allotment Association Newsletter

## AGM

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The AGM of the Earley Allotment Association was held on 15<sup>th</sup> October, thank you to all that attended.

As can be seen from the minutes, we have increased the membership over the year and have a healthy surplus, one of the reasons we have instigated a subscription freeze for this year and reduced the subscriptions for new members.

A new committee was nominated and confirmed as follows:-

Linda Pelling	Chairman and Newsletter
Sandra Christopherson	Treasurer
Liz Kerry	Secretary
Julia Tredgett	Social Secretary

Derek Smith, Roger Bonham and Peter Burton were voted in as committee members.

A resolution regarding the EAA joining the RHS as an Affiliated Society was discussed and it was decided the decision should be made in February 2013, when the membership year starts and the fee has been decided.

We have joined the social media age, the EAA is now on Facebook and Twitter, we hope this will aid communication and it is instant. The Facebook Group is 'Earley Allotment' and the Twitter Handle is '@EarleyAllot'. If you have a Facebook or Twitter account why not give them a try.

The meeting was followed by tea and cakes, and an interesting vegetable quiz, which showed how much we **didn't** know about vegetables, which was won by Dionne Tannetta with 16 out of 20 correct answers. The raffle included prizes of Champagne, wine, books and chocolates.



*Come and join us*

## Best Allotment Award 2012



*Plot 34*

Eventually, ETC have made a decision on the Best Allotment Award. It was a close run thing, there were a few plots in contention and the committee had to have a further meeting to come to a decision.

This year the girls have triumphed.

The award for the Best Allotment goes to Dionne Tannetta & Simon Fiest, Plot 34, who only took on the plot last year. The Most Improved Allotment was considered to be Plot 58, worked by Liz McElroy, who took on the plot earlier this year. Well done to you all.



*Plot 58*

## Seasonal Tips

The leaves have remained on the trees longer this year, but when they started falling with fell very quickly. Leafmold is easy to make but you have to be patient. Gather the leaves and stack in chicken wire cages or put in refuse sacks, stabbed with a fork for ventilation and leave for a year. The resultant dark crumbly humus is one of the best soil improvers there is.

Give the greenhouse a good wash down, if you intend to use the greenhouse during the winter for salad crops, you can use bubble wrap for insulation. Don't forget to give the greenhouse a good airing on fine days to stop disease developing.

With the hard frosts expected this month, it's time to harvest cabbages and cauliflowers. The Brussels sprouts should be ready for Christmas.

Leeks should be about ready now, just lift when needed, you can lift a few and heel into a trench filled with loose compost so they will be easier to lift in severe weather. Lift parsnips once the first frost has sweetened them.

Garlic needs a good spell of cold weather to form fat bulbs, plant cloves now to spend winter in the ground. Onion sets and shallots are best left until the New Year.

Rhubarb gets so big and exhausts

the soil after about five years. Lift out the crown and chop into sections each with a bud and some roots and replant with plenty of well-rotted manure. Leave for a year before picking again.

You can also use any spare crowns for forcing. Place the crown in a large bucket of well manured compost in a greenhouse; exclude the light with an upturned dustbin. Harvest from early spring.



## Cookery Corner

This recipe uses that very underrated vegetable - beetroot. Is beetroot a superfood? A source of Folic acid, potassium, magnesium and iron as well as Vitamins A, B6 and C. It is said beetroot juice may reduce blood pressure and help fight the progression of Dementia. This is a quick, easy and colourful way of using that red globular root.

Thank to Julia Tredgett for this recipe.

### Roasted Beetroot Penne

#### Serves 4

700g beetroot

A few glugs of olive oil

3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

400g penne or other chunky pasta

Juice of ½ lemon

½ mug of single cream

To garnish

Plenty of freshly grated Parmesan cheese



1. Preheat oven to 190°C/gas 5. Place the whole beetroot in an oiled baking dish, rub with olive oil and cover tightly with foil.
2. Roast the beetroot until fork tender. The cooking time will vary according to the size of the beetroot, but will probably be around 1-1½ hours. When cooked, remove beetroot from oven and set aside to cool.
3. Add pasta to a pan of boiling water and cook according to instructions.
4. Peel the beetroot (the skin should slip off easily) and cut into bite size chinks.
5. Sauté the garlic in the olive oil for a couple of minutes over a medium heat. Add the beetroot and sauté for a few minutes to ensure it's hot. Stir in the lemon juice and mix well.
6. Lower the heat and gradually add the cream, cooking for about 2-3 minutes until just hot.
7. Spoon the creamy beetroot mixture over the drained pasta and top with lots of Parmesan cheese.

If you have any leftovers, try tossing them with crumbled feta or goats cheese and some olive oil and bake in a greased baking dish at medium heat for about 20 minutes, until heated thoroughly and slightly crunchy on top. You'll end up with a rather colourful and sophisticated version of macaroni cheese.

## How to make a Christmas Wreath for the Door

The tradition of bringing greenery into the house at Christmas dates back to the Pagan festival of Yule. Unmarried women tied sprigs of holly to their beds to guard them from witches. Ivy was the ancient symbol of Bacchus, the Roman God of wine and revelry. The smell of Rosemary and Bay was thought to be extremely offensive to evil spirits. These plants may have gained their mythical status because they remained evergreen in the depths of winter. With the addition of some cypress and spruce this abundant foliage can make an inexpensive Christmas wreath.

You will need a 30cm metal wreath ring and some florists wire on a reel from a garden centre or florist and some moss. The stuff you rake out of the lawn is perfect or you can buy sphagnum moss.

Attach the end of the wire to the wreath frame. Roll the moss into orange sized balls, place a moss ball on the frame and wrap the wire around the moss ball several times attaching it to the frame. Continue attaching the moss balls butting them up to each other, until the frame is covered, you will have a moss doughnut. Don't cut the wire yet.

Cut the foliage into in to 12-13cm pieces. Lay a piece of foliage on top of the moss at the top of the frame and bind it with the wire only trapping the stem. Place another piece of foliage on the inside of the mossed frame and bind, then another piece of foliage on the outside edge of the frame and bind as before.

Repeat around the frame overlapping each previous piece by 50-70%. Repeat lengths of ivy or holly, but leave more space between pieces. Finish by adding sprigs of rosemary for fragrance at intervals around the wreath. Make a hanging loop at the top, then cut the wire.



You can leave the wreath green or add pine cones, berries, dried fruit or baubles.

Finish with a ribbon bow.

## Dates for your Diary

### Festive Seed Swap

Want a break from Christmas shopping or the football? Why not come to a festive Seed Swap.

This year we are adding soup and bread as well as mulled wine to help with the chill.

This extravaganza is to be held on **Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December 12.00 - 14.00** at the Allotments.

The marquee will be in the car park as usual.

Liz Kerry has kindly volunteered to make Culver Lane Allotment soup; she



has placed a box at the end of her plot (60) for donations of any spare vegetables. There will be homemade bread to accompany the soup.

There will also be available mulled wine, non-alcoholic as well as alcoholic and mince pies and tea and coffee. All this for a donation of £1 to EAA funds.

The real business of the day is the Seed Swap. Have you any spare seeds left over from your sowings this year or maybe you have collected too many seeds from your crops? Vegetable or flower seeds, all welcome.

Bring them along and see what you can get in exchange. This is your chance to try something else before going to the expense of buying the seeds.

Any seed left over will be sown and sold as plants at our Spring Plant Sale.

## Deer Update

I saw Derek on the motorway embankment on Sunday, he just stood there staring at us, not spooked at all.

ETC have erected some more higher wooden fencing at three further possible entry points.

If anybody can identify further points of access, please let the Plot rep. know - [david.pelling1@ntlworld.com](mailto:david.pelling1@ntlworld.com) and he can pass it on to ETC for action.

**Happy  
Christmas  
From  
Derek & Doris**



## Plot Fees

The plot fees are due for renewal in January 2013. ETC announced at renewal time this year that the fees will increase, approx. by 10%. Even with this increase, using the rent for our plot as an example, that works out at £2.70 per month. Cheaper than the gym for all that exercise and any harvest is a bonus!

## HPHS News

The Shed will be closing at the end of November and opening again **Saturday 5th January 2013**.

Seed potatoes will be available from the second week of January, weather permitting.

A reminder that Membership fee of £1 is due in January.

## Vegetable Word Search

I must admit, I haven't done all of this, it needs a bit of concentration, but rest assured, it can be done.

C	A	B	B	A	G	E	E	Z	S	T	H	H	H	N
M	J	I	X	A	P	R	Y	U	L	O	C	H	G	J
Z	J	V	N	J	I	A	G	B	B	M	A	M	F	L
K	R	A	B	H	R	A	R	R	P	A	N	U	Z	K
Y	E	E	P	E	R	E	O	S	B	T	I	S	H	D
B	R	M	W	A	E	C	B	Z	N	O	P	H	S	M
T	A	E	P	O	C	T	I	M	U	I	S	R	A	F
S	S	S	L	O	L	T	R	B	U	R	P	O	U	F
P	A	Y	L	E	N	F	U	O	A	C	B	O	Q	C
C	D	I	N	V	C	O	I	R	O	R	U	M	S	S
E	C	U	T	T	E	L	I	L	N	T	L	C	E	X
P	U	M	P	K	I	N	H	N	U	I	L	H	T	A
E	K	O	H	C	I	T	R	A	O	A	P	E	O	B
D	K	S	C	E	L	E	R	I	A	C	C	S	E	K
Y	F	I	S	L	A	S	C	A	R	R	O	T	G	K

ASPARAGUS	CABBAGE	CELERY	MUSHROOM	SALSIFY	TOMATO
BEAN	CARROT	CUCUMBER	ONION	SAMPHIRE	TURNIPS
BEETROOT	CAULIFLOWER	KOHLRABI	PARSNIP	SPINACH	LEEK
BROCCOLI	CELERIAC	LETTUCE	PUMPKIN	SQUASH	